

NEW BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS

MEETING: COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
DATE: SEPTEMBER 13, 2017
TIME: 7:02 P.M.
PLACE: CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER, ROOM 214, MUNICIPAL BUILDING

PRESENT: COUNCILLORS LINDA MORAD, CHAIRPERSON; JAMES OLIVEIRA, VICE CHAIRMAN; IAN ABREU; NAOMI CARNEY; DEBORA COELHO; JOSEPH LOPES; DANA REBEIRO; KERRY WINTERSON

ABSENT: COUNCILLORS HUGH DUNN; BRIAN GOMES; STEVEN MARTINS

* * *

Councillor Morad called the Finance Committee Meeting to order and took attendance. The Clerk read a Communication from Councillor Dunn explaining his absence and Communications from Councillors Gomes and Martins explaining their tardiness from the meeting. These Communications were received and placed on file by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Councillor Abreu.

* * *

Item number three (3) was taken out of order without objection.

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a WRITTEN MOTION, Council President Lopes, requesting that the City of New Bedford study the potential cost savings associated with the establishment of an Opt-Out Medical Insurance Program for City employees. (To be Referred to Mayor Mitchell, CFO Ari Sky, Personal Director Sandy Vezina, and the Committee on Finance.) (Ref'd 2/23/17) (3)

Councillor Morad informed the Committee regarding item number three (3) that she received a letter from Sandy Vezina, Personnel Director stating she is unable to attend tonight's meeting so she spoke with Councillor Lopes and he agreed to table this item to the next meeting.

On motion by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Councillor Carney, the Committee VOTED to receive and place on file the Communication from Sandy Vezina, Personnel Director. This motion passed on a voice vote.

On motion by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Councillor Carney, the Committee VOTED: To table this matter for the next Finance Committee Meeting. This motion passed on a voice vote.

* * *

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a COMMUNICATION, Mayor Mitchell, to City Council, submitting AN ORDER for the APPROPRIATION of \$140,000.00 from

ORDINARY REVENUE & MUNICIPAL RECEIPTS to ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP, OTHER FINANCING USES (Ref'd 7/20/17) was received and placed on file by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Councillor Carney. (1, 1a)

Michelle Paul, Director of Environmental Stewardship was present to give an overview of the request. She explained that this money was received as a part of the Aerovox agreement for the EPA/PCB issue with the city. The request is to use the \$140,000 to pay for consulting fees to help develop a long term plan for the EPA/PCB facility and 10 acres of land off of the Riverwalk area in the city. Once the EPA shuts down their production, they will move to restore the land for future use. They have asked the city to come up with a plan for the property so it can be left the way the city wants it. If the city does not present a plan, the bare minimal on the property can happen which may not be to the city's advantage. They are planning on using the original consultants used on the Riverwalk project. The money requested is money put aside for such projects and it is not new money being allocated. They simply need the Council to approve the use of the money to retain the consultant.

Councillor Lopes asked if there was a time line in place in securing a scope of the property and make recommendations on how the land should be left for use. There was a time line of 8 – 18 months for the Aerovox property but no time line has been set for the EPA property. Councillor Lopes asked that when the scope was completed that Ms. Paul send a copy to all Councillors. She said she would.

Councillor Carney was under the impression this was a request to use new money. She was told it was not. She expressed concerns that we were going to retain a consultant to help develop a use for the land in question, when in the end it may not happen at all.

Councillor Rebeiro asked what firm was to be used and she was told the firm that did the previous consultant work for the area which was retained by the city.

Councillor Morad asked how much was spent on phase one for the consultant and she was told \$100,000. She asked if the consultant could do phase two at a discount and she was told the \$140,000 was a firm figure. It had already been placed out to bid and the City Solicitor's Office said it was okay to use the same consulting firm.

Councillor Rebeiro asked that once the consultant is secured that there be an open process that includes the neighborhood to come up with an agreeable plan for the property in question. She was told there would be public meetings once the money was approved and they began to move forward.

Ms Paul explained that the EPA is already asking to see the proposed plans for the property. The EPA should be finished and leave the site in 2025.

Councillor Winterson cautioned those Councillors who thought spending \$140,000 now would prove beneficial. He reminded the Committee that if they did not move forward with this now that if Ms. Paul comes back at some future time to request the funding, say 5 - 6 years from now the cost would no doubt be higher. Ms. Paul reiterated that the EPA has already reached out to her department asking that she begin her process in proposing uses for the two properties.

On motion by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Councillor Carney, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council ADOPTION of the ORDER for the APPROPRIATION of \$140,000 from ORDINARY REVENUE & MUNICIPAL RECEIPTS to ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP, OTHER FINANCING USES. This motion passed on a Roll Call Vote of Yeas 7, Nays 1, with Councillor Carney opposed.

* * *

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a COMMUNICATION, Community Preservation Committee, to City Council, submitting the CPA annual budgets for Fiscal Years 2016, 2017 and 2018, to appropriate or reserve from the Community Preservation Fund annual revenue in the amounts recommended by the Community Preservation Committee for committee administrative expenses, community preservation projects and other expenses in fiscal years 2016, 2017 and 2018 with each item to be considered a separate appropriation (Copy all Councillors 06/02/2017) (Ref'd 6/8/17) was received and placed on file by Councillor Abreu and seconded by Councillor Winterson. (2)

The Clerk read Communications from Community Preservation Co-Chairs Janine da Silva and Colleen Dawicki stating they were unable to attend this meeting but would be sending the Clerk of the Community Preservation Committee, Jessica Bailey in their place. These Communications were received and placed on file by Councillor Abreu and seconded by Councillor Winterson.

Ms. Jessica Bailey, the Clerk of the CPA was present to answer questions from the Committee. She gave an overview of the money that has been taken in as a result of the CPA being created. She reviewed the report provided to the Committee and explained that a 1.5 percent tax is assessed on both residential and commercial properties, higher than \$100,000. This means that the percentage taken is not applied to the first \$100,000 of the property. The CPA has been in place since July 1, 2015. The monies collected were not officially credited until FY16. The state is to match the money taken in each fiscal year. The state did not contribute the first year FY16, but will be contributing for FY17 and 18. The CPA must apply 10% of the money taken in to 3 specific areas, those being Historic Preservation, Open Space/Recreation and Community Housing. The CPA is about to begin the process of securing proposals from those interested parties, but is not able to request these proposals until the funding has been approved by the Council. Once the proposals are received they will be reviewed by the CPA and awarded. However, the final awarding of the proposals must be approved by the City Council.

Councillor Abreu thanked the CPA for having informational meeting throughout the city.

Councillor Oliveira asked for consideration for his ward, ward one, where they pay the highest in residential taxes and the bulk of the city's commercial properties are in the Business Park that projects in this area be given extra consideration.

Councillor Carney asked for a time line on when submissions would be taken in and awarded. She was told once the funding is allocated, in early October a public meeting would be held. Eligibility determinations would take place at the end of October, there would be a 45 day process which would take the Committee to mid

December, and they would be reviewed in January 2018 and referred to the City Council in February of 2018.

Councillor Carney asked if the full \$2,000,000 raised thus far would be used. She was told no, they would like to retain some of the funding to be able to increase spending as the years move forward. Better to save some of the funding then spend it all at once.

Ms. Bailey explained that the 5% referenced towards expenses would not be for existing staff but to retain experts if needed to review proposals to help make a decision on proposals. It would be used for property appraisers, consultants and legal ads for example.

Councillor Winterson expressed his desire that where ward 5 pays some of the higher residential taxes that his ward be given consideration as well.

The Councillors asked that the wealth be spread equally amongst all six wards.

Councillor Morad asked that when the CPA does have their public meeting that they have it in a central location and that they have good advanced notice of the meeting preferably two to three weeks prior to the actual meeting with a week before reminder.

On motion by Councillor Lopes and seconded by Councillor Oliveira, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council APPROVAL of the COMMUNICATION, Community Preservation Committee, to City Council, submitting the CPA annual budgets for Fiscal Years 2016, 2017 and 2018, to appropriate or reserve from the Community Preservation Fund annual revenue in the amounts recommended by the Community Preservation Committee for committee administrative expenses, community preservation projects and other expenses in fiscal years 2016, 2017 and 2018 with each item to be considered a separate appropriation. This motion passed on a Roll Call Vote of Yeas 8, Nays 0.

* * *

The Chair recommended receiving and placing on file and taking “No Further Action” on items 4 and 4a. They are as follows:

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a WRITTEN MOTION, Councillor Gomes, requesting, that the Committee on Finance meet with a Representative of the Mayor’s Office and the Commissioner of the Department of Public Infrastructure, Zeb Arruda, for the complete financial costs of the second hurricane barrier walkway located on the west side of Cove Road; and further, that the Committee Members be provided with a breakdown of the costs associated with said walkway. (Ref’d 2/23/17) (4)

Notice, City Clerk of reference of a COMMUNICATION, Euzebio Arruda, Commissioner, Department of Public Infrastructure to Councillor Linda M. Morad, Chairperson, Committee on Finance, submitting a letter outlining the complete financial costs of the second hurricane barrier walkway located on the west side of Cove Road, with a breakdown of the costs associated with said walkway. (Letter dated 7/27/17) (4a)

On motion by Councillor Oliveira and Councillor Lopes, the Committee VOTED: To recommend to the City Council to take “No Further Action” on the WRITTEN MOTION, Councillor Gomes, requesting that the Committee on Finance meet with a Representative of the Mayor’s Office and the Commissioner of the Department of Public Infrastructure, Zeb Arruda, for the complete financial costs of the second hurricane barrier walkway located on the west side of Cove Road, and further, that the Committee Members be provided with a breakdown of the costs associated with said walkway. This motion passed on a voice vote.

On motion by Councillor Oliveira and seconded by Councillor Lopes, the Committee VOTED: To receive and placed on file the COMMUNICATION, Euzebio Arruda, Commissioner, Department of Public Infrastructure to Councillor Linda M. Morad, Chairperson, Committee on Finance, submitting a letter outlining the complete financial costs of the second hurricane barrier walkway located on the west side of Cove Road, with a breakdown of costs associated with said walkway. This motion passed on a voice vote.

Councillor Oliveira made a motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Councillor Abreu.

This meeting adjourned @ 8:16 p.m.

ATTEST:

Denis Lawrence, Jr.,
Clerk of Committees